THEOSOPHY

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Occultism teaches that the presence in man of various creative powers—called genius in their collectivity—is due to no blind chance, to no innate qualities through hereditary tendencies—though that which is known as atavism may often intensify these faculties—but to an accumulation of individual antecedent experiences of the Ego *in its preceding life, and lives.*

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

CONTENTS

CYCLIC PATHS AND NECESSITIES 65

THE MYSTERY OF INDIVIDUALITY 73

HUMAN ORIGINS 77

LETTERS, QUESTIONS, COMMENT 82

ON THE LOOKOUT 86

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AUM

As the one fire, after it has entered the world, though one, becomes different according to what it burns, thus the One Self within all things, becomes different according to whatever it enters, but it exists apart.

—*Upanishads*

THEOSOPHY

VOLUME 65 JANUARY, 1977 NUMBER 3

CYCLIC PATHS AND NECESSITIES

THE multiple uses of H.P.B.'s writings soon become evident from a reflective study of material she contributed to *Lucifer*. Sometimes metaphysical instruction of students seems her main purpose, while on other occasions the intent is to point out hitherto unperceived realities to general readers in the world of scholarship. These purposes now blend, now separate, with often a minor element of one contained by the other. And always there is the underlying appeal to the intuition, for those who have become open to this aspect of H.P.B.'s work.

The article, "Old Philosophers and Modern Critics," posthumously published in two parts (*Lucifer,* July and August, 1892), makes a good illustration. From its title we may conclude that she wrote this valuable expansion on passages appearing early in *Isis Unveiled* in pursuance of a goal spoken of in the Introductory to *The Secret Doctrine*: "For in the twentieth century of our era scholars will begin to recognize that the *Secret Doctrine* has neither been invented nor exaggerated, but, on the contrary, simply outlined; and finally, that its teachings antedate the Vedas."

The article may be read as a treatise on Pythagorean and Platonic thought, but also as showing the underlying identity of Greek with far more ancient teachings, originating with Vyasa, Kapila, and Patanjali. Still other intentions are served, one being a defense of Plato's immediate successors in the Academy, and a

vindication of the Neoplatonists as faithful expositors of Plato's oral doctrines. It is interesting to note in passing that past scholarly rejection of Neoplatonic explanations of some of Plato's oral or secret teachings (referred to in this article) is today considerably modified by a more open-minded consideration of this claim (see the second chapter of *Neoplatonism* [Scribners, 1972] by R. T. Wallis.) The tendency of modern scholarship—as yet no more than a tendency—to recognize the philosophic strength and sometimes the underlying unity of idea in the works of ancient thinkers can now be readily seen.

In addition, in this article are valuable comments on the metaphysics of the after-death states, illuminating by reason of their lucid interpretation of Platonic doctrines, connecting Plato's meaning with teachings found in *The Key to Theosophy* and giving explanations which expand on those teachings. There is for example this passage:

> Happy is the man physically pure, for if his external soul (astral body, the image of the body) is pure, it will strengthen the second (the lower Manas), or the soul which is termed by him [Plato] the higher mortal soul, which, though liable to err from its own motives, will always side with reason against the animal proclivities of the body. In other words, the ray of our Higher Ego, the lower Manas, has its higher light, the reason or rational powers of the Nous, to help it in the struggle with Kamic desires.

In general, however, this article may be regarded as putting on record a key for future scholars to use in restoring to modern understanding the true meanings in the writings of philosophers of the Platonic tradition, while showing, also, that they expounded ideas well known to the teachers of ancient India. It stands to reason that this restoration—a work of the scholarship of the future (already begun in the present)—is a part of the labors declared as necessary and required by justice in the Preface to *Isis Unveiled. Isis,* H.P.B. said, "calls for a restitution of borrowed robes, and the vindication of calumniated but glorious reputations." A further correction of scholarly error may be seen in her clear relation of Platonic ideas to occult psychology, as in the matter of the after-death states, since this material is in direct contradiction to those commentators who, "almost with one consent, shrink from every passage [in Plato] which implies that his metaphysics are based on a solid foundation, and not on ideal conceptions."

Another contribution to *Lucifer* by H.P.B. is an article of quite a different sort, yet serving similar purposes. This is her translation or rendition of "The Vision of Scipio," a fragment by Cicero (reprinted in THEOSOPHY for November, 1976). This material shows how, by the addition of a few footnotes, a brief classic from Roman times may be turned into a philosophical jewel. The discussion of the Platonic conception of the soul, given in the *Timaeus* (also in the *Phaedrus* and the *Laws*) as the *self-moving* element or number, is the known or unrecognized foundation for every metaphysics of human freedom in Western thought, and the basis, incidentally, of Pico's criticism of astrology, of renewed pertinence today. This idea also provides Cicero's exposition of the Platonic teaching with both spiritual dignity and rational ground.

In this translation, again, we find H.P.B.'s notes emphasizing the ancient knowledge of astronomy and of the law of great cycles. What may seem a minor point, but which Theosophical readers are likely to single out, is Scipio Africanus Major's counsel to his grandson: "Now duty, excellent though it is when shown to parents and relations, is best of all, when practiced toward one's country." He calls this mode of life "the path to Heaven." H.P.B. comments in a note: "The Roman mind saw no higher duty than this. It was necessarily the *summum bonum* of a race even in its best days of warriors and statesmen." This remark, while brief, is more than an aside. Later in the account of the Vision, Scipio finds reason to repeat his grandfather's statement that duty to one's country is the "path to Heaven," but this time with the qualification that service to country is only "a *side path*" leading to the main highway. Here H.P.B. comments: "A hint that even true Patriotism is not the *Path,* though tending in its direction."

Such hints, we may think, have large implications. One could take them as light on one great, driving tendency of past European and American civilization—the determined evolution of the nation-state—in contrast with what seems today a clear outgrowing of the forms and processes of aggressive nationality. Moreover, in the framework of a Roman modification of the Platonic philosophy, one may recognize a distinct loss of perspective in comparison to the more symmetrical account given by Plato. One need only read dialogues such as the *Apology,* the *Crito,* and the *Phaedo* to recognize Plato's ranking of duties. Socrates' obligation

to the Athenian State is shown by his devoted attempt to educate its young men; but his obligation to truth—to the welfare of the soul—is shown by his refusal to alter his instruction by reason of prevailing opinion or prejudice. Again, as he explains in the *Crito,* it is his patriotic obligation as a citizen to accept the sentence of death without attempt at escape or evasion—he will obey the letter of the law, even its misapplication, in his case—yet he turns this fulfillment of national or civic duty into a dramatic illustration, unforgotten by history and posterity, of a far higher obligation. How diminished this larger duty becomes in Roman times, needing H.P.B.'s note for us to recognize, buried in Scipio's dream, the "hint" of a higher moral law than patriotism! The keynote of H.P.B.'s own attitude in such matters is sounded in the first issue of the *Theosophist,* where she speaks unequivocally of politics and uses the example of Socrates as means to define the outlook which she represents:

> Unconcerned about politics; hostile to the insane dreams of Socialism and of Communism, which it abhors—as both are but disguised conspiracies of brutal force and sluggishness against honest labour; the Society cares but little about the outward human management of the material world. The whole of its aspirations are directed towards the occult truths of the visible and invisible worlds. Whether the physical man be under the rule of an empire or a republic, concerns only the man of matter. His body may be enslaved; as to his Soul, he has the right to give to his rulers the proud answer of Socrates to his judges. They have no sway over the *inner* man.

Always, in passages of this sort, bearing somewhat on current events, it is necessary to remember that H.P.B. is almost entirely concerned with the quality of *motive.* Thus, in the *Key* she may refer to Jesus and Buddha as *"altruists—preaching most unmistakably Socialism* of the noblest and highest type, self-sacrifice to the bitter end," and in both that volume and one of her messages to the American Theosophists identify Bellamy's *Looking Backwards* as admirably representing "the Theosophical idea of what should be the first great step toward the full realization of universal brotherhood," yet there is no real contradiction in these passages of what was previously declared in the *Theosophist* article. Social forms embodying the spirit and practice of brotherhood have her approval for their moral content and direction of human striving; the forms themselves are hardly at issue save, one may think, as "side paths" of a particular moment of history.

These side paths are experiences through which humanity must pass during a gradual evolution toward more comprehensive understanding of the meaning of human associations on earth. The symmetries and scales of the duties involved are given in the *Path* article, "Living the Higher Life."

What does she say, if anything, concerning the merits of side paths and forms of social life? Nothing specific, since they are subject to continual change and sometimes alter in moral qualities as rapidly as the chameleon in color:

> No one person and no society can lay down a hard-and-fast rule in this respect. Much must necessarily be left to the individual judgment. One general test may, however, be given. Will the proposed action tend to promote that true brotherhood which it is the aim of Theosophy to bring about? No real Theosophist will have much difficulty in applying such a test; once he is satisfied of this, his duty will lie in the direction of forming public opinion. And this can be attained only by inculcating those higher and nobler conceptions of public and private duties which lie at the root of all spiritual and material improvement. In every conceivable case he himself must be a centre of spiritual action, and from him and his own daily individual life must radiate those higher spiritual forces which alone can regenerate his fellow-men. (*The Key to Theosophy*, pp. 235-36.)

Following this passage there is direct and emphatic discussion of the importance of spreading the ideas of Karma and Reincarnation.

We have little difficulty in determining what H.P.B. thought of the nation-states of her time—political entities which seem only to have worsened in character during the century since. "Pride and conceit," she wrote in "Our Cycle and the Next," "are the two hideous cancers devouring the heart of *civilized* nations, and selfishness is the sword handled by evanescent *personality* to sever the golden thread that links it to immortal INDIVIDUALITY." And in the same article, speaking of the forms of "charity" adopted by modern nations—the large appropriations to meet sudden emergencies—funds dissipated so soon and with such small effect—she wrote:

> To such munificent bounties we prefer countries where there are no needy people at all, *e.g.*, those small communities, the remnants of once mighty races, which allow no beggars among their co-religionists—we mean the Parsis. Under the Indian and Buddhist Kings, like Chandragupta and Asoka,

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> people did not wait, as they do now, for a national calamity, to throw the surplus of their over-flowing wealth at the head of a portion of the starving and the homeless, but worked steadily on, century after century, building *rest-houses,* digging wells and planting fruit-trees along the roads, wherein the weary pilgrim and penniless traveler could always find rest and shelter, be fed and *receive* hospitality at the national expense.

Obviously, H.P.B. saw the merit in social forms which allowed for and fostered the exercise of self-initiated action and, through the development of habits of self-reliance and individual responsibility, produced a citizenry which could be depended upon to meet all common needs through personal response, acting both as individuals and community according to the needs which arose. What sort of society is most likely to bring into flower such moral qualities? In recent months Lookout has noticed some present-day efforts seeking to move in this direction.

Meanwhile the sway of past tendencies under the rule of the "*Karmic* cycles" (referred to in *The Secret Doctrine* section, "Cyclic Evolution and Karma") continues to shape external events. One wonders whether H.P.B.'s awesome allegory, "Karmic Visions," should also be read as historical prophecy—indicating the final destiny of the social formations we describe as nation-states —and showing, also, the strait-jackets in which a misguided patriotism may garb souls unable to recognize the larger radius of duty, seen so clearly and followed by Socrates, the penalties of which he was willing to pay.

The "side path" of the nation-state has for centuries been a vehicle of learning and reform for Western peoples. There have been curious combinations of political utopianism with spiritual aspiration in Western history, of which the extraordinary literature celebrating the reign of Queen Elizabeth gives an example. In the eighteenth century, the reformed nation, as shown by the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States, became the vehicle of a rising tide of idealism—the idealism of self-respect, of freedom and equality—applying both reason and principle to the ordering of national life. All this, we may think, was a part of the emergence to further activity of the Manasic principle in the affairs of men. It fell to Lincoln to guard the nation against a destructive separative tendency in mid-nineteenth-century years, and also, whatever his psycho-political necessities at the time, to strike off the bonds of slavery from a

portion of the population destined to become a part of the new racial synthesis of the future, as Mr. Judge anticipates in "On the Future: A Few Reflections."

But in the twentieth century, it has been the role of nation-states to lead countless people into ways of unspeakable brutality, making, as we look back upon our recent past, such words as "genocide" commonplaces of socio-historical analysis. Since the early 1950's a time of bitter political persecution and abuse of the internal powers of the American State, we have had almost nothing but lessons in waste, corruption, and selfish indifference to the welfare of other peoples from the behavior of nation-states. Protesters, resisters, rebels, and even nihilists have arisen in recent years—men of diverse moral coloring, some seeming true heroes and reformers, others answering to the description of those named by H.P.B. at the end of "The Fall of Ideals"—all symptoms of the inadequacy and decline of the rule of nation-states.

How these circumstances may change, when there will be emergence of other, more flexible and fruitful forms of social organization is now hardly predictable, although, already, declarations in favor of smaller social aggregations, based on socio-geographic unities are increasingly heard. The term "ecoregion," recently coined, has the sound of an idea whose time may have come.

The modern world is filled with examples of social experiments, some more open to change and adaptation than others; some seeming truly expressive of a vision of community. The very time, as we have been told, is one of rapid and radical change.

How shall we discriminate among these sometimes disturbing and sometimes inspiring tendencies? The meaning of the age may supply the key: it is a time of the *further* incarnation of Manas, bringing high opportunities along with grave dangers and increased responsibilities. It is of the nature of such a cycle that, while there may be true solutions to present problems and right choices in our dilemmas, these solutions and choices will inevitably be those we have worked out from an inspiration of our own. This is the intrinsic character of manasic action and behavior.

The role of Theosophy in the modern world is to strengthen

the possibility that these efforts and labors, as time goes on, will be increasingly Buddhi-Manasic in quality. It is a project at which many souls are working, some more self-aware than others, with some laborers in plain view, and others not yet known; while there are still others who cannot be truly known, perhaps for long centuries, although the high destiny of their presence in the world is a fulfillment toward which all lovers of Theosophy strive.

THE LIMITATIONS OF CLAIRVOYANCE

The occult septenary scheme in nature with all its modifications produces multiple effects, and no mere clairvoyant is able to see the truth that underlies the simplest instance of clairvoyant preception. If a man moves from one chair to another, immediately hundreds of possibilities arise for the clairvoyant eye, and he alone who is a highly trained and philosophical seer—an adept, in short—can combine them all so as to arrive at true clear-perception. In the simple act described almost all the centres of force in the moving being go into operation, and each one produces its own peculiar effect in the astral light. At once the motion made and thoughts aroused elicit their own sound, color, motion in ether, amount of etheric light, symbolic picture, disturbance of elemental forces, and so on through the great catalogue. Did but one wink his eye, the same effects follow in due order. And the seer can perceive but that which attunes itself to his own development and personal peculiarities, all limited in force and degree.

—WILLIAM Q. JUDGE

THE MYSTERY OF INDIVIDUALITY

III: IS "I-AM-NESS" IMMORTAL?

WHEN we pass to such questions as whether individuality has a beginning, and therefore an ending, and whether there are self-conscious beings actively present at the commencement of an earth or solar system, we are brought face to face with profound philosophical problems that penetrate to the heart of the universe and of man. And we border on mysteries, the ultimate solution of which will be man's only at the moment of highest spiritual evolution.

The concept of immortality held by some students of Theosophy would lead one to believe that the soul has existed eternally in the past, and will exist eternally in the future, *as an individualized entity*. Also, that such self-conscious beings assumed an active, conscious part in the production of our solar system. Perhaps these ideas have naturally arisen owing to an acquaintance with the oft-repeated truism that immortality implies the existence of a soul which has never been created, and therefore must be without beginning or ending. But where in the teachings can be found the statement that the soul *uninterruptedly* exists as an individualized unit, a separate I-am-I consciousness, independent of all the rest?

It becomes necessary, therefore, to scrutinize carefully all available statements as to the source of egoity in man, what actually constitutes individuality, and what may be its limitations as well as ultimate destiny.

Far from regarding man's individuality as a continuous reality, H. P. Blavatsky indicates that man's higher principles are "individualized and separated only on the spheres of illusion by a differentiation as illusive as the rest." (*S.D.* I, 275.) in the *Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge*, a most interesting reference is to be found:

> . . . all labour more or less under illusions, and chiefly under the great illusion (Maya) that they are, as personalities, distinct beings from other beings, and that even their *Selves* or Egos will prevail in the eternity (or sempiternity, at any rate) as

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> such; whereas not only we ourselves, but the whole visible and invisible universe, are only a temporary part of the one beginningless and endless WHOLE, or that which ever was, is, and will be. (p. 32.)

It is in this WHOLE that we are apparently to seek for our *uninterrupted* immortality. Elsewhere she states that "the spark will rebecome the Flame." (*S.D.* I, 265.) The flame is in itself a Unity. "The rays from this flame will be complex, each acting in its own straight line." (*Trans.*, p. 26.)

And what, then, of self-consciousness, that wondrous power that makes man man? Does that too have beginnings and endings? ". . . there are no finite differentiated minds during Pralaya," states the same Teacher. "Everything outside of the Absolute and immutable Sat (Be-ness), is necessarily finite and conditioned, since it has beginning and end." (*Trans.*, p. 19.)

The Secret Doctrine definitely states, however, that "the *Monad* of every living being . . . *is an individual Dhyan Chohan, distinct from others, a kind of spiritual individuality of its own,* during one special Manvantara." (I, 265.) And in one of her articles, H.P.B. suggests that each Ego has a body which is "immortal, throughout the manvantara unless Nirvana puts an end to it before." (THEOSOPHY 3:16.) It is pertinent to ask, however: When does the Manvantara commence, for the active self-conscious Ego? This is a most important point to ascertain, inasmuch as the impression is sometimes gathered by students that our universe came into existence through an act or series of acts of great, perfected self-conscious men! Certainly, at the beginning of our universe, all beings were present who were to be concerned in that evolutionary period, but how were they present, and in what condition? To quote again from the *Transactions,* where H.P.B. describes the nature of the highest hierarchies of being, the Ah-hi or Dhyan Chohans:

> Like all other Hierarchies, on the highest plane they are *arupa, i.e.,* formless, bodiless, without any substance, mere breaths. On the second plane, they first approach to Rupa, or form. On the third, they become Manasa-putras [Sons of Mind], those who become incarnated in man. With every plane they reach they are called by different names. The Ah-hi of this Manvantara exist no longer; they have long ago become Planetary, Solar, Lunar, and lastly, incarnating Egos, for, as said, "they are the collective hosts of spiritual beings."
>
> A man can choose what he will think about; can the analogy be applied to the Ah-hi?

> No; because a man has free will and the Ah-hi have none. They are obliged to act simultaneously, for the law under which they must act gives them the impulse. Free will can only exist in a Man who has both mind and consciousness, which act and make him perceive things both within and without himself. The "Ah-hi" are Forces, not human Beings.
>
> But are they not conscious agents in the work?
>
> Conscious in as far as they act within the universal consciousness. But the consciousness of the Manasa-putra on the third plane is quite different. It is only then that they become *Thinkers*. (pp. 23-5.)

In the sense of a self-conscious spiritual being, the teaching seems to be that there never was any man on this planetary chain, or in this round, or on this globe, until 18 million years ago. Hundreds upon hundreds of millions of years have elapsed, but so far as the seven classes of Monads under the sway of Karmic Law are concerned, intellectual evolution did not begin until eighteen million years ago. Then there was no differentiation into individual egos. The teaching in *The Key to Theosophy* that "every human being is the bearer, or *Vehicle,* of an *Ego* coeval with every other Ego; because all *Egos* are *of the same essence* and belong to the primeval emanation from one universal infinite *Ego*" (p. 110), appears to refer to this very period prior to separation. In *The Secret Doctrine,* H.P.B. quotes from a Master's letter in which reference was made to certain classes of Dhyan Chohans who "are too far progressed and spiritualized to be thrown back forcibly from Dhyan-Chohanship into the vortex of a new primordial evolution through the lower Kingdoms."

> ". . . Then they *become an active force* and commingle with the Elementals, to *develop little by little the full type of humanity.*" That is to say, to develop in, and endow man with his Self-conscious mind, or *Manas*. (*S.D.* II, 233 fn.)

The feeling of egoity dates from this period, it would appear, but even then was not firmly established, for we are informed that "Individual *Manasa-putras* or the Kumaras are the direct radiations of the divine Ideation—'individual' in the sense of later differentiation, owing to numberless incarnations." (*Trans.*, p. 65.) "The sense of 'being'," states Robert Crosbie, "comes from perceptive power in action; as the range of perception and reflection increases, the realization of 'being' becomes stronger." (*Answers to Questions,* p. 20.)

A sense of individuality commences on the plane of mind. On the plane of Atma or Buddhi such feeling is impossible:

> Buddhi in man is the vehicle of Atman, which vehicle is of the essence of the highest plane of Akasa and therefore does not differentiate. (*Trans.*, p. 28.)
>
> There is no potentiality for creation, or self-Consciousness, in a *pure* Spirit on this our plane, unless it's too homogeneous, perfect, because divine, nature is, so to say, mixed with, and strengthened by, an essence already differentiated. It is only the lower line of the Triangle [Manas or Mind] . . . that can furnish this needed consciousness on the plane of differentiated Nature. (*S.D.* II, 80.)
>
> Apart from Cosmic Substance, Cosmic Ideation could not manifest as individual consciousness, since it is only through a vehicle of matter that consciousness wells up as "I am I," a physical basis being necessary to focus a ray of the Universal Mind at a certain stage of complexity. (*S.D.* I, 15.)

Intellectual evolution was not possible before the incarnation for another excellent reason. Until then there was no contrast. The moment we incarnate, there is the contrast between the spirit and matter in us. The purely spiritual man is not intellectual; his consciousness is said to be universal. He had to incarnate to progress intellectually. The activity of Manas depends on contrast. It becomes inactive when there is no material to work on. Thus when we are in the various sleep or after death states, we are not self-conscious. And during Pralaya, where is Manas? Nonexistent. Manas is absorbed in Buddhi at the close of each life, Buddhi-Manas is absorbed in Atman at the close of each Manvantara. But they do not cease to *be*.

Every night of our lives we go into a comparable condition, yet re-emerge in all our integrity the following day. So, it is said that *"The thread of radiance which is imperishable and dissolves only in Nirvana, re-emerges from it in its integrity on the day when the Great Law calls all things back into action."* (*S.D.* II, 80.)

> Nor is the individuality—*nor even the essence of the personality,* if any be left behind—lost, because re-absorbed. For, however limitless—from a human standpoint—the paranirvanic state, it has yet a limit in Eternity. Once reached, the same monad will *re-emerge* therefrom, as a still higher being, on a far higher plane, to recommence its cycle of perfected activity. (*S.D.* I, 266.)
>
> At the "Day be with us" every Ego has to remember all the cycles of his past reincarnations *for Manvantaras*. . . . It sees the stream of its past incarnations by a certain divine light. It sees all humanity at once, but still there is ever, as it were, a stream which is always the "I."—H.P.B. (from *The Friendly Philosopher,* p. 98.)

HUMAN ORIGINS

WITH the Brahmins the Pitris are very sacred, because they are the Progenitors, or ancestors of men—the first *Manushya* on this Earth—and offerings are made to them by the Brahmin when a son is born unto him. They are more honoured and their ritual is more important than the worship of the gods.

May we not now search for a philosophical meaning in this dual group of progenitors?

The Pitris being divided into *seven classes,* we have here the mystic number again. Nearly all the Purânas agree that three of these are *arupa,* formless, while four are corporeal; the former being intellectual and spiritual, the latter material and devoid of intellect. It is the Hosts of the four material classes who create men simultaneously on the seven zones.

Now, with regard to the seven classes of Pitris, each of which is again divided into seven, a word to students and a query to the profane. That class of the "Fire Dhyanis," which we identify on undeniable grounds with the Agnishwattas, is called in our school the "Heart" of the Dhyan-Chohanic Body; and it is said to have incarnated in the third race of men and made them perfect. The esoteric Mystagogy speaks of the mysterious relation existing between the hebdomadic essence or substance of this angelic Heart and that of man, whose every physical organ, and psychic, and spiritual function, is a reflection, so to say, a copy on the terrestrial plane of the model or prototype *above.* Why, it is asked, should there be such a strange repetition of the number seven in the anatomical structure of man? Why should the heart have *four lower* "cavities and *three* higher divisions," answering so strangely to the septenary division of the human principles, separated into two groups, the higher and the lower; and why should the same division be found in the various classes of Pitris, and especially our Fire Dhyanis? For, as already stated, these Beings fall into four corporeal (or grosser) and three incorporeal (or subtler) "principles," or call them by any other name you please.

NOTE.—A student's collation from *The Secret Doctrine* and *Lucifer.*

Why do the seven nervous plexuses of the body radiate *seven* rays? Why are there these seven plexuses, and why seven distinct layers in the human skin?

As the Commentary, broadly rendered, says:

1. *"Every form on earth, and every speck (atom) in Space strives in its efforts towards self-formation to follow the model placed for it in the* 'HEAVENLY MAN.' . . . *Its (the atom's) involution and evolution, its external and internal growth and development, have all one and the same object—man; man, as the highest physical and ultimate form on this earth; the* MONAD, *in its absolute totality and awakened condition—as the culmination of the divine incarnations on Earth."*

2. *"The Dhyanis (Pitris) are those who have evolved their* BHUTA *(doubles) from themselves, which* RUPA *(form) has become the vehicle of monads (seventh and sixth principles) that had completed their cycle of transmigration in the three preceding Kalpas (Rounds). Then, they (the astral doubles) became the men of the first Human Race of the Round. But they were not complete, and were senseless."*

The Pitris shoot out from their ethereal bodies, still more ethereal and shadowy similitudes of themselves, or what we should now call "doubles," or "astral forms," in their own likeness. This furnishes the Monad with its first dwelling, and blind matter with a model around and upon which to build henceforth. But *Man is still incomplete.*

This has a very occult meaning, however. There are seven classes of Pitris enumerated in the Purânas—but only three classes are composed of the progenitors (from *pitar* father) of primeval man; one class creates the *form* of man—nay, is, or rather becomes, that form (or physical man) itself; the other two are the creators of our souls and minds. It is a very complicated tenet.

The Pitris are *lunar* deities and our ancestors, because they *created the physical man.* The Agnishwatha, the Kumara (the seven mystic sages), are solar deities, though the former are Pitris also; and these are the "fashioners of the *Inner* Man."

Each class of Creators endows man with what it has to give: the one builds his external form; the other gives him its essence, which later on becomes the Human *Higher Self* owing to the *personal exertion of the individual;* but they could not make men as they were themselves—perfect, because sinless; sinless, because having only the first, pale shadowy outlines of attributes,

and these all perfect—from the human standpoint—white, pure and cold as the virgin snow. Where there is no struggle, there is no merit. Humanity, "of the Earth earthy," was not destined to be created by the angels of the first divine Breath: therefore they are said to *have refused* to do so, and man had to be formed by more material creators, who, in their turn, could give only what they had in their own natures, and no more.

The "Fathers," the lower Angels, are all Nature-Spirits and the higher Elementals also possess an intelligence of their own: but this is not enough to construct a THINKING man. *"Living* Fire" was needed, that fire which gives the human mind its self-perception and self-consciousness, or *Manas;* and the progeny of *Parvaka* and *Suchi* are the *animal electric* and solar fires, which create animals, and could thus furnish but a physical living constitution to that first astral model of man.

The number seven does not imply only seven Entities, but seven groups or Hosts, as explained before. The highest group, the Asuras born in Brahmâ's first body—which turned into "Night" —are septenary, *i.e.,* divided like the Pitris into seven classes, three of which are arupa (bodiless) and four with bodies. They are in fact more truly our *Pitris* (ancestors) than the Pitris who projected the first physical men.

It thus becomes clear why the *Agnishwatta,* devoid of the grosser *creative fire,* hence unable to create physical man, having no *double,* or astral body, to project, since they were without any *form,* are shown in exoteric allegories as Yogis, Kumuras (chaste youths), who became "rebels," *Asuras,* fighting and opposing gods, etc., etc. Yet it is they alone who could complete man, *i.e.,* make of him a self-conscious, almost a divine being—a god on Earth. The *Barhishad,* though possessed of creative fire, were devoid of the higher MAHAT-mic element. Being on a level with the lower principles—those which precede gross objective matter —they could only give birth to the outer man, or rather to the model of the physical, the astral man.

We now come to an important point with regard to the double evolution of the human race. The Sons of Wisdom, or the *spiritual* Dhyanis, had become "intellectual" through their contact with matter, because they had already reached, during previous cycles of incarnation, that degree of intellect which enabled them to become independent and self-conscious entities, *on this plane* of matter. They were reborn only by reason of Karmic effects. They

entered those who were "ready," and became the Arhats, or *sages*. This needs explanation.

It does not mean that *Monads* entered forms in which other Monads already were. They were "Essences," "Intelligences," and *conscious spirits;* entities seeking to become still more conscious by uniting with more developed matter. Their essence was too pure to be distinct from the universal essence; but their "Egos," or *Manas* (since they are called *Manasaputra,* born of "Mahat," or Brahmâ) had to pass through earthly human experiences to become *all-wise,* and be able to start on the returning ascending cycle. The *Monads* are not *discrete* principles, limited or conditioned, but rays from that one universal *absolute* Principle. The entrance into a dark room through the same aperture of one ray of sunlight following another will not constitute *two* rays, but one ray intensified. It is not in the course of natural law that man should become a *perfect* septenary being, before the seventh race in the seventh Round. Yet he has all these principles latent in him from his birth. Nor is it part of the evolutionary law that the Fifth principle (*Manas*), should receive its complete development before the *Fifth* Round. All such prematurely developed intellects (on the *spiritual* plane) in our Race are *abnormal;* they are those whom we call the "Fifth-Rounders." Even in the coming seventh Race, at the close of this Fourth Round, while our four lower principles will be fully developed, that of *Manas* will be only proportionately so. This limitation, however, refers solely to the spiritual development. The intellectual, on the physical plane, was reached during the Fourth Root-Race. Thus, those who were "half ready," who received "but a spark," constitute the average humanity which has to acquire its intellectuality during the present Manvantaric evolution, after which they will be ready in the next for the full reception of the "Sons of Wisdom." While those which "were not ready" at all, the latest Monads, which had hardly evolved from their last transitional and lower animal forms at the close of the Third Round, remained the "narrow-brained" of the Stanza. This explains the otherwise unaccountable degrees of intellectuality among the various races of men—the savage Bushman and the European—even now. Those tribes of savages, whose reasoning powers are very little above the level of the animals, are not the unjustly disinherited, or the *unfavoured,* as some may think—nothing of the kind. They are simply those *latest arrivals* among the human

Monads, which *were not ready*: which have to evolve during the present Round, as on the three remaining globes (hence on four different planes of being) so as to arrive at the level of the average class when they reach the Fifth Round. One remark may prove useful, as food for thought to the student in this connection. The MONADS of the lowest specimens of humanity (the "narrow-brained" savage South-Sea Islander, the African, the Australian) *had no Karma to work out when first born as men, as their more favoured brethren in intelligence had.* The former are spinning out Karma only now; the latter are burdened with past, present, and future Karma. In this respect the poor savage is more fortunate than the greatest genius of *civilized countries.*

Had not the "sons of Mahat," speaking allegorically, skipped the intermediate worlds, in their impulse toward intellectual freedom, the animal man would never have been able to reach upward from this earth, and attain through self-exertion his ultimate goal. The cyclic pilgrimage would have to be performed through all the planes of existence half unconsciously, if not entirely so, as in the case of the animals. It is owing to this rebellion of intellectual life against the morbid inactivity of pure spirit, that we are what we are—self-conscious, thinking men, with the capabilities and attributes of Gods in us, for good as much as for evil. Hence the REBELS are our saviours. Not all men became incarnations of the "divine *Rebels,*" but only a few among them. The remainder had their fifth principle simply quickened by the spark thrown into it, which accounts for the great difference between the intellectual capacities of men and races.

Woe to the race which does not stop at the crossroads before continuing on its way, which does not make a problem out of its own inner life, which does not feel the heroic necessity of justifying its destiny and of thowing light on its mission in history! The individual cannot get his bearings in the universe except through his race, because he is immersed in it like the drop of water in the passing cloud.

—JOSE ORTEGA Y GASSET

letters • questions • comment

What is the nature of matter as we experience it? What are its inherent qualities as distinguished from the qualities we may have given it?

The most important thing to be said about matter as we commonly think of it is that, speaking philosophically, it is an illusion. This is not to suggest that material conditions can be disregarded, but to establish the basic fact that matter as known through the five senses should not be accorded the same reality as, say, the inner perceiving intelligence in us, the origin of all action and the creator of fields of experience. This distinction is clearly made by Mr. Judge in an article on "Evolution" (Judge pamphlet No. 8). Speaking of the time when manifestation first began, he says:

> What was projected into the objective world at that time must have been life itself, which under the action of the law of differentiation split itself up into a vast number of lives, which we may call individual, the quantity of which it is not possible for us of finite mind to count. In the Hindu system these are called Jivas and Jivatman. Within these lives there is contained the entire plan to be pursued during the whole period of manifestation, since each life is a small copy of the great All from which it came. Here a difficulty arises for studious minds calling for some attention, for they may ask "What then do you do with that which we call 'matter,' and by and through which the lives manifest themselves?"
>
> The reply is that the so-called matter is an illusion and is not real matter, but that the latter—sometimes known in Europe as primordial matter—cannot be seen by us. The real matter is itself only another form of the life first thrown out, but in a less perfect state of differentiation, and it is on a screen of this real matter that its inner energies project pictures which we call matter, mistaking them for the real. It may then be further asked, "Have we not been led to suppose that that which we supposed was matter but which you now say is an illusion is something absolutely necessary to the soul for acquiring experience of nature?" To this I reply that such is not the case, but that the matter needed for the soul to acquire

> experience through is the real unseen matter. It is that matter of which psychic bodies are composed, and those other "material" things all the way up to spirit. It is to this that the *Bhagavad-Gita* refers where it says that spirit (purusha) and matter (prakriti) are coeternal and not divisible from each other. That which we and science are accustomed to designate matter is nothing more than our limited and partial cognition of the phenomena of the real or primordial matter.

This means that the matter perceived by the five senses is merely reflective of our position on the evolutionary scale, an illusion in the sense of not revealing anything in itself. The primary state of matter is described by H.P.B. as "the self-existing basis whose septenary manvantaric differentiations constitute the objective reality underlying the phenomena of each phase of conscious existence." (*S.D.* I, 328.) These differentiations would include, for example, the astral matter of our inner bodies which, for a long time, has been saturated with the impressions of past actions, often reaching back for centuries. In another article ("Cyclic Impression and Return and Our Evolution") Mr. Judge writes of the "tides" made by the return of these impressions—"that is to say, you do a thing once, there will be a tendency to repeat itself; you do it twice, it doubles its influence, a greater tendency to do that same thing again." Elsewhere, speaking more generally, he says:

> If we believe in the doctrine of the One Life, then every cell in these material bodies must be governed by the same laws. Each cell must be *a life* and have its karma, devachan, and reincarnation. Every one of these cells upon incarnating among the others in our frame must be affected by the character of those it meets; and we make that character. . . .
>
> It is said that our universe is a collection of atoms or molecules—called also *"lives"*; living together and through each the spirit struggles to reach consciousness, and that this struggle is governed by a law compelling it to go on in or between periods. In any period of such struggle some of these atoms or collections of molecules are left over, as it were, to renew the battle in the next period, and hence the state of the universe at any time of manifestation—or the state of each newly-manifested universe—must be the result of what was done in the preceding period. . . .
>
> Without stopping to argue about what matter is, it will be sufficient to state that it is held to be co-eternal with what is called "spirit." That is, as it is put in the *Bhagavad-Gita*: "He who is spirit is also matter." Or, in other words, spirit is the opposite pole to matter of the Absolute. But of course this

matter we speak of is not what we see about us, for the latter is only in fact phenomena of matter: even science holds that we do not really see matter. ("Universal Applications of Doctrine.")

From the foregoing it becomes clear why sages have declared that by the application to life of universal ideas regarding man and nature, human nature *can* be changed, and, by the effect of this action on the nature around us, all matter can be raised to a higher level of refinement, more responsive to the light of fully conscious mind—a process on which the doctrine of human perfectibility is based.

What is the relationship between necessity and learning?

As a being whose lower principles connect him with the whole of physical and psychic nature, and whose mind can embrace the universe, man is a focus for all forces and powers. Ignorance of the nature and function of these powers and their correlations—of what, in short, is real in what we do, in the sense of lasting and regenerative, and what temporary or possibly distorting—causes nature to react in kind, establishing one kind of necessity for learning.

The intuitive perception of the Self within, of the being and action which could spring from true self-actualization, bespeaks another order of necessity, born of the longing to make spiritual enlightenment shape one's practical life. The constantly changing balance between these two "necessities" makes the course of men's lives and their evolution into self-determined beings.

Not to incarnate the higher man as actively as possible in daily life is to turn nature into the retributive agent of Karma. This sort of necessity grows out of the distorting relationships humans have established. But there is another necessity—one voluntarily met—in which our present bonds with nature are recognized as the progeny of our own former actions. In this case the desire to learn is the natural response to a larger vision of what might be, a glimpse of broader relationships with the rest of life waiting to be explored.

The complexities of human nature might be seen as the field in which these necessities interact until Manas has united with Buddhi and the field itself is unified. This comes about through conscious and persistent effort to invoke the higher Ego, making lower Manas its obedient servant. Then the "man of mind complete" is involved in even the smallest acts. The fundamental

impulse of life itself to evolve ever higher expressions of this unity is found in Chapter Eighteen of the *Bhagavad-Gita,* where Krishna tells Arjuna that if he refuses to make this effort consciously, the time will come when "the principles of thy nature will impel thee to engage."

The universal character of the will to evolve, by one means or another, is conveyed in Mr. Crosbie's comment on the will in *Answers to Questions on The Ocean of Theosophy*. He says:

> Will is the energy of Consciousness expressed in action, on any plane of manifestation. There are many aspects of the Will, from the ordinary one which is "the will to live" and is expressed in the automatic physical action, such as the heart-beat, digestion, etc.; that of the actions following on ordinary thought, desires and wants; that which is developed by various forms of practice; to the highest phase, that of the Spiritual Will. This phase is developed by true unselfishness, a sincere and full desire to be guided, ruled and assisted by the Higher Self, and to do that which, and suffer or enjoy whatever, the Higher Self has in store for one by way of discipline or experience.

The relations between will and necessity, as here conceived, are qualified by the source of our motives. Motives that originate in the purposes of the soul lead to learning that is universal—that is, to knowledge at the level of true causation, which can be turned to the requirements of any specific situation. There is a distinction to be made between this kind of knowledge and the learning applicable only to certain circumstances. The highest knowledge would include both.

Most minds instead of living and acting out their *ideals* in the present, and fulfilling their present known duties to others, waste most of their opportunities in memory and anticipation. To live and act fully and rightly in the present is the whole of life; the dynamic force of the brain would then act fully and rightly, and there would be no exhaustion.

—Robert Crosbie

on the lookout

Biologists on "Altruism"

Restoration of the terms of moral and ethical discourse to modern biological studies in books such as the recently published *Sociobiology* (Harvard University Press, 1975), by Edward O. Wilson, may be bewildering to some readers. Is this a revival of anthropomorphic conceptions in the life sciences? Curiously, the theme of "altruism" and altruistic behavior runs through this large volume of study and analysis of the social activities and patterns of animals, from bacteria to the higher mammals. The author makes this definition:

> When a person (or animal) increases the fitness of another at the expense of his own fitness, he can be said to have performed an act of *altruism*. Self-sacrifice for the benefit of offspring is altruism in the conventional but not in the strict genetic sense, because individual fitness is measured by the number of surviving offspring. But self-sacrifice on behalf of second cousins is true altruism at both levels; and when directed at total strangers such abnegating behavior is so surprising (that is, "noble") as to demand some kind of theoretical explanation. In contrast, a person who raises his own fitness by lowering that of others is engaged in *selfishness*. While we cannot publicly approve the selfish act we do understand it thoroughly and may even sympathize.

"Darwinian Enabling Device"

The frequent use of the word "fitness" in this passage shows that Prof. Wilson is evaluating behavior by a Darwinian criterion. Survival is manifestly the goal, and species survival, when contributed to by sacrificial acts, is served by this "altruistic" behavior. Indeed, in one place the author suggests that in some relationships, when altruism is conceived as a mechanism by means of which favorable genes are preserved in a species, "spirituality becomes just one more Darwinian enabling device." Using the case in which an individual, at some personal risk, saves another from drowning, Prof. Wilson says:

> A population at large that enters into a series of such moral obligations, that is, reciprocal altruistic acts, will be a popu-

lation of individuals with generally increased genetic fitness. The trade-off actually enhances personal fitness and is less purely altruistic than acts evolving out of interdemic and kin selection.

Contractual "Altruism"?

This sort of altruism, it is said, occurs mostly among humans:

> Human behavior abounds with reciprocal altruism consistent with genetic theory, but animal behavior seems to be almost devoid of it. Perhaps the reason is that in animals relationships are not sufficiently enduring, or memories of personal behavior reliable enough, to permit the highly personal contacts associated with the more human forms of reciprocal altruism. Almost the only exceptions I know occur just where one would expect to find them—in the more intelligent monkeys such as rhesus, macaques and baboons, and in the anthropoid apes. Members of troops are known to form coalitions or cliques and to aid one another reciprocally in disputes with other troop members. Chimpanzees, gibbons, African wild dogs, and wolves also beg food from one another in a reciprocal fashion.

"Altruist Genes"!

However, it is important to recognize that such characterological qualities, whether in animals or man, are regarded as strictly biological in origin. Products of "emergent evolution," they are held to manifest by reason of a potentiality which is somehow present in the genes:

> Imagine a population in which a Good Samaritan appears for the first time as a rare mutant. He rescues but is not rescued in turn by any of the nonaltruists who surround him. Thus the genotype has a low fitness and is maintained at no more than mutational equilibrium. Boorman and Levitt have formally investigated the conditions necessary for the emergence of a genetically mediated cooperation network. They found that for each population size, for each component of fitness added by membership in a network as opposed to the reduced fitness of cooperators outside networks, and for each added number of individuals contacted in the network, there exists a critical frequency of the altruist gene above which the gene will spread explosively through the population and below which it will slowly recede to the mutational equilibrium. How critical frequencies are attained from scratch remains unknown.

Small wonder that Prof. Wilson remarks in one place that such explanations have "taken most of the good will out of altruism." Armed, however, with theories of altruistic behavior based on

human action, Prof. Wilson proceeds in some 600 pages to demonstrate that "altruism" of one sort or another occurs throughout the animal kingdom. A single example is the general readiness of social bees and wasps "to throw their lives away upon slight provocation," when the welfare of the hive is threatened.

Quotation from the Gita

It is no doubt natural that biologists should seek to explain all behavior, social as well as individual, in terms of the hereditary endowments and resources of organisms. All biological science has evolved by this means and to be a biologist means to pursue research along these lines. What is of particular interest, in a work like *Sociobiology,* is the emphasis on what we think of as "moral" qualities. The subjective tendency of its definitions is natural enough, since a "society," in this study, is defined as a population in which coherent and unifying *communication* occurs. Yet on the surface, and throughout, *Sociobiology* seems a determined effort to assimilate the moral qualities of man to the mysterious potentialities of matter—or at least of matter in the form of complex organisms. It contains no hint of any other source for the nobilities of human character. At the same time the temper of the work—a text from the *Gita* begins the book—suggests a change in mood on the part of serious scientists, and some day an irresistible "ninth wave of common sense" may oblige a return to such studies with very different assumptions in mind.

Much "Remains To Be Seen"

Reference to the *Gita* occurs more than once. The closing paragraph of an early chapter will illustrate the author's mood and intentions:

> In conclusion, although the theory of group selection is still rudimentary, it has already provided insights into some of the least understood and most disturbing qualities of social behavior. Above all, it predicts ambivalence as a way of life in social creatures. Like Arjuna faltering on the Field of Righteousness, the individual is forced to make imperfect choices based on irreconcilable loyalties—between the "rights" and "duties" of self and those of family, tribe, and other units of selection, each of which evolves its own code of honor. No wonder the human spirit is in constant turmoil. Arjuna agonized, "Restless is the mind, O Krishna, turbulent, forceful, and stubborn; I think it no more easily to be controlled than is the wind." And Krishna replied, "For one who is uncontrolled, I agree the Rule is hard to attain; but by the obedient spirits

> who strive for it, it may be won by following the proper way." In the opening chapter I suggested that a science of sociobiology, if coupled with neurophysiology, might transform the insights of ancient religions into a precise account of the evolutionary origin of ethics and hence explain the reasons why we make certain moral choices instead of others at particular times. Whether such understanding will then produce the Rule remains to be seen. For the moment, perhaps it is enough to establish that a single strong thread does indeed run from the conduct of termite colonies and turkey brotherhoods to the social behavior of man.

That man himself is the origin of all these "behavior patterns" is not an idea that would be in any way acceptable to sociobiologists and other scientists concerned with study of the relations which unite all social creatures in cooperative groups. They seem to be still pursuing the line of thought which, years ago, led Jacques Loeb to say: "The day will come when what we now call moral acts in man will be explained simply as tropisms." The gene, apparently, is now regarded as the treasure-trove of tropisms. But the day will also come when all such mechanisms of causation will be recognized as only reflections in the devices of physical existence of the acts of high spiritual and moral intelligence.

Effect of Computers

The reviews currently appearing in *Science,* the weekly organ of the A.A.A.S., give evidence of the rapidly changing mood among the teachers and practitioners of science. The attention accorded a book critical of the influence of computers, *The Conquest of the Will,* by Abbe Mowshowitz is an excellent example. This leading review in *Science* for last Sept. 17 shows that while policies in government and business are not made by computers, but are only justified and implemented by their calculations, the trust in these machines tends to make policies unchallengeable, shutting out alternatives. Both the author and the reviewer, Kenneth C. Laudon, find this trend a mechanization of human life, a bureaucratic rationalization of the constant drive toward more goods and services. In consequence, "there arise structures of control and coordination that limit our freedom, subject us to formal rules and regulations that do not allow for human diversity, and alter the relation of citizens to society to one of subjects to regime."

Recognition of "Will"

The author proposes that we have lived through enough history to realize that there is "an inherent contradiction in the conquering spirit of science and technology." Mr. Mowshowitz continues:

> The conquest of nature, space, and time is seen as a paradoxical victory over the human ego. As man extended his domain over the natural world, he became alienated from the sources of his vitality. Through obsessive exercise of the will to power in the elaboration of technique, the will itself became enfeebled and subject to control by autonomous forces linked to mechanical progress. . . . This procedure has its counterpart in the evolution of industrial technology and social organization. In both cases, it is reflected in the imperative to divide and conquer.

Of particular interest in the case of this book is the use of the word "will" in the title. Until quite recently, this inner power of mind—in Theosophy termed the force of spirit in action—has been virtually excluded from serious literature as either unscientific or indeed nonexistent. Now it is returned in this study of the psycho-social influence of computers, not quietly but boldly, and without apology.

City at its Worst

The lower self, Mr. Judge remarks in one of his *Letters,* "great in its way," when examined, "is like looking into a glove." It also throws up clouds of illusion and exhibits the various polarities of material life. Something similar might be said of the great cities of the modern world, now, many of them, in desperate trouble. in the last August *Atlantic,* Caskie Stinnett, a resident of New York City, devotes two pages to telling why he is moving away, never to return. He ends by saying:

> I don't want to live in a city where a woman advertises for a lost dog and receives dozens of phone calls from a variety of people saying that they are torturing the animal and will continue to do so unless she pays large sums of money; or in a city where I am told I must always have $10 in my wallet for a possible mugger because without that I will surely be stabbed; or in a city where my mailman leaves a slip in my box at Christmas suggesting the size of the tip he expects. I shall find some of these things wherever I go, and perhaps all of them, but I don't think so.

. . . and its Best

These seem to be the worst things Mr. Stinnett has to report; he is without doubt an effective magazine journalist (his profession), but in the October *Atlantic* he is reproved by a correspondent who says:

> For every story of pollution, prostitution, panhandling, or pickpocketing, there are dozens of others demonstrating the impulsive generosity and honesty of New Yorkers, like the one I read in the New York *Times* this morning about a cab driver who searched for four hours before finding the out-of-town photographer who had left $600 worth of camera equipment in his taxi.

Without invoking the selective destinies alloted by Karma, it can be pointed out that a city of the size of New York is bound to present an intensification of every aspect of human nature, and the attitude of the witnessing individual is likely to play a part in what happens to him there. A man who returned to New York after years of absence tells in the *New Republic* for Sept. 11, 1976 the story of his visit. He took the advice of a friend who said: "You can approach New York in two ways. . . . You can live your life. Or you can let fear live it for you." Resolving to put aside fear, he enjoyed a delighting evening in the darkness of Central Park—reputedly a hazardous place at night—and then met with a remarkable experience:

> The next day I found myself sitting next to a black man on the subway—and he was not one of your Ralph Bunche types. Rhinestone stud in his left ear. Red patent leather platform shoes. He was humming the fourth Brandenburg concerto. I asked him why. He was an organist, he explained. Next Sunday his choir was performing the St. Matthew Passion. If I met him on 125th Street, he suggested, he would take me to his church.

A Different Set of Figures

> Friends initially feared for my life, then despaired of my sanity. But that evening in Harlem was more than a memorable musical experience. It was a liberation. Now—from Morningside Heights and Spanish Harlem to Hell's Kitchen and the Arab quarter of Brooklyn—I go where chance and opportunity lead me. I have seen many beautiful things and many ugly things, and no harm has come to me. The New York crime rate, in fact, is lower than in Chicago, Philadelphia, Washington and Los Angeles. Among seven million New

> Yorkers, and millions of visitors last year, just over 50 people were killed by strangers. (Most homicides are committed by friends and relatives.) One is more likely to be killed in New York by a traffic accident than by a figure lurking in a darkened doorway, more likely to burn oneself in the kitchen than to be mugged.

While not quite a glowing advertisement for the city, this comment shows that reports of continuous sordid disaster and crime in New York may be exaggerated, assembled in the distorting way that Mr. Stinnett's "farewell" was apparently put together. In any event, there seems a sense in which the cities of our time represent confirmations of what is said by Mr. Judge so expressively about the Kali Yuga, of which great urban centers are a distillation: that we can do "nothing *against*" it, but "a great deal in it, for it is to be remembered that the very fact of its being the iron, or foundation, age, gives opportunities obtained in no other."

Missing Knowledge

What is the best way to get at the ills of the technological society? This is a question on which much is written, but seldom with more than inadequate conclusions. The difficulties have become increasingly obvious. Six years ago, two members of a National Academy of Sciences panel reported on an effort to formulate a method of technological assessment. The basic problem, they said in effect, is that no resource of present-day society shows the way to consider the welfare of society *as a whole*. They wrote in the *Scientific American* for February, 1970:

> Almost without exception, technological developments will affect some people or interests beneficially and others adversely. There is no accepted arithmetic wherewith one can neatly subtract the pains from the pleasures in order to arrive at a net index of social desirability.

After illustrating at some length the conflicts of interest which result from evaluation from particular points of view, the writers say:

> The achievement of a better system for assessing technology faces major obstacles. The society is ill-equipped to handle conflicting interests. It does not know how to value in a quantitative way such goals as a clean environment and the preservation of future choices. Analytical tools are primitive and crucial knowledge is often missing.

The "Unpleasant Truth"

An article in *Science* for Aug. 27 of last year shows that the problem is still being formulated in the same way. Writing on "Economic Dilemmas," Abe Wolman observes:

> It is abundantly evident that the world is complex and beset by vicissitudes of a malignant nature and by the sometime degradations exercised by man. The combination of realities imposes upon the biosphere a series of threats. Their amelioration demands a high degree of sophisticated behavior by man and a selection of priorities of functions guaranteed to improve his quality of life, while preserving to the utmost what nature may profusely make available to him. This is a large order. It demands an illumination of choices, a consequent assessment of priorities, and a vast cultural acclimation to a changing set of values. . . . When one moves to considerations of implementation of solutions, and the necessary attendant decision-making, the hard realities of politics, economics, and social philosophy inevitably intrude. Clarification by scientists and technologists, with all of their analytical tools, becomes an input necessity. At this stage the unpleasant truth emerges that vast areas of ignorance persist. Their continuing assessment is required, even with the uncomfortable pronouncement "I do not know."

No Easy Way

This seems a healthy sort of admission, even though it does not go far enough. Still required is the further recognition, as Aldo Leopold pointed out years ago in *A Sand County Almanac,* that even the most careful calculations will not achieve conservation unless there is adoption of a basically ethical attitude toward the land and the planet. As he put it:

> No important change in ethics was ever accomplished without an internal change in our intellectual emphasis, loyalties, affections, and convictions. The proof that conservation has not yet touched these foundations of conduct lies in the fact that philosophy and religion have not yet heard of it. In our attempt to make conservation easy, we have made it trivial.

"Heal the Center"

Leopold's classic was published in 1949 and has since had a wide influence. Happily, contemporary reformers are stressing the same theme even more forthrightly. Some passages of a review of E. F. Schumacher's *Small Is Beautiful* in the *Sierra Club Bulletin* for last June are evidence of the strengthening of moral and

ethical attitudes that will be required to make ecological knowledge effective. The reviewer, John Lewallen, says:

> Schumacher strikes at the core of modern economic theory, where he finds the most vicious sort of competitive fervor. . . . As he sees it, our present economic emphasis is on the product rather than the person. This obsession with products is destroying both people and the earth. His metaphysics leads him to reverse the consumer ethic: "Since consumption is merely a means to human well-being, the aim should be to obtain the maximum of well-being with the minimum of consumption.
>
> In *Small Is Beautiful,* as when fielding questions before an audience, Schumacher is content to sketch broadly the outlines of a decentralized, fully employed, nonviolent society. He evades answering most questions about details. Not, I believe, because he does not have the answers, but to keep from getting bogged in the irrelevant. Heal the center, he is saying, and all other good works will follow naturally.

Language of the Spirit

The reviewer muses:

> Many members of the Gentle Revolution are taking up the task of metaphysical reconstruction. Throughout Northern California, rural and urban, I have encountered people experimenting with environmental harmony from spiritual foundations of Sufism, Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, and many other disciplines of the soul. The same goes on throughout the country.
>
> It is difficult to write about this phenomenon without sounding soft-headed, insubstantial and irrelevant. Yet what is more relevant than people's fundamental beliefs? We have lost the very language with which to speak of spirit, and it is precisely this kind of discourse that Schumacher believes must be reestablished.

Appeal to Moral Feelings

There is some correspondence between what this writer calls the Gentle Revolution and the kind of change in feeling and attitude of which H.P.B. wrote in "The Tidal Wave." The present cycle of awakening is under way, and there are many who respond to the new spirit. Most valuable of all, for some purposes, are those who combine in themselves the quality of discipline learned from a scientific education with a current of ethical insight such as Leopold gave expression to, and which is gaining so much spon-

taneous support for Mr. Schumacher. This level of appeal is not disdainful of genuine scientific knowledge, but makes good use of it. It reaches people, not at the political level, but in their innate feelings about what is right and good to do. At the heart of the appeal is an ethical principle, setting the level for the use of scientific knowledge.

The Guiding Principle

Little by little, the successes of the ecology movement are illustrating the truth of what H.P.B. declared years ago in *The Key to Theosophy*:

> To seek to achieve political reforms before we have effected a reform in *human nature, is like putting new wine in old bottles*. Make men feel and recognize in their innermost hearts what is their real, true duty to all men, and every old abuse of power, every iniquitous law in the national policy, based on human, social or political selfishness, will disappear of itself.

The failure of most social plans and panaceas, she said, results from the fact that "there is no really guiding principle, and there is certainly no one principle which connects them all." The idea of "healing the center" first, after which other good works will follow, is clearly in harmony with what is said in the *Key*.

Now a Familiar Doctrine

A film actress, Marsha Mason, recently told a writer for the *Los Angeles Herald-Examiner* (Sept. 22, 1976) that although she personally accepted reincarnation she had been reluctant to say anything about it for fear of ridicule. Then, after some reading, and accepting a part in a movie about reincarnation, she felt free to describe her views:

> "I believe everybody comes into your life because he's destined to. You choose this part of your life to work out certain rules. The lessons you have to learn are based on your past karma, so all good actions bear good fruit. You burn up bad karma with positive, loving, supporting thoughts.

While the idea of thinking your way out of karmic debts sounds a bit facile, there is an element of truth in it, and the common sense of Karma and reincarnation is evident in even this brief statement. Reincarnation is now by no means a strange and unfamiliar doctrine. A great many people take it for granted, and while popular writers persist in speaking of it as part of the

"supernatural," the door is wide open to an understanding of the puzzling aspects of life on which reincarnation throws a clear light. This seems the chief significance of the new popularity of the idea. The prejudice against rebirth no longer has importance and those who have been deterred from considering it seriously by the denials of either religious tradition or scientific attitudes have opportunity to recognize the profound philosophy of life of which reincarnation is a part.

"Cosmic Religion"

In a book recently noted in these pages, *The Nature of Scientific Discovery,* a Harvard professor of physics, Gerard Holton, speaks of Einstein's Spinozistic sort of religion and quotes the author of Relativity on the "cosmic religious feeling" which, Dr. Einstein said, "is very difficult to elucidate . . . to anyone who is entirely without it, especially as there is no anthropomorphic conception of God corresponding to it [nor any dogma or church]. . . . " Commenting, Prof. Holton suggests that among scientists "a quiet underground current exists along the lines described by Einstein," adding: "It would be far more ominous if this cosmological or charismatic tradition were to dry up altogether, for that would indeed signal the decline of science."

This seems a clear if somewhat faint reminder of H.P.B.'s remark that religion and science were once "closer knit than twins":

> The fruit of the Tree of Knowledge gives death without the fruit of the Tree of Life. Man must know *himself* before he can hope to know the ultimate genesis even of beings and powers less developed in their inner nature than himself. So with religion and science; united two in one they were infallible, for the spiritual intuition was there to supply the limitations of physical senses. Separated, exact science rejects the help of the inner voice, while religion becomes merely dogmatic theology—each is but a corpse without a soul.

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